

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020, AT 6:00 P.M., IN THE FLORENCE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, LOCATED AT 775 N. MAIN STREET, FLORENCE, ARIZONA.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Walter called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Tara Walter, John Anderson, Karen Wall, Kristen Larsen, Michelle

Absent: Bill Hawkins, Judy Hughes

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Mayor Walter called for a moment of silence.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Walter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC** Call to the Public for public comment on issues within the jurisdiction of the Town Council. Council rules limit public comment to three minutes. Individual Councilmembers may respond to criticism made by those commenting, may ask staff to review a matter raised or may ask that a matter be put on a future agenda. However, members of the Council shall not discuss or take action on any matter during an open call to the public unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion and legal action.

Ms. Sharon Gerard, Eloy Resident, stated that she is a candidate for the State House in this District. She will have a Town Hall Legislative Update on March 5, 2020 at the Florence Library and Community Center. She asked that you bring your concerns.

Ms. Melissa Romain, Florence Resident and supervisor at the Correction Education Department, stated that they are working on high school accreditation and are coming on their three-year accreditation. One of their criteria is that they create a local advisory board and inquired if any members wish to be part of their board.

Mayor Walter asked that she provide the information to Mr. Brent Billingsley, Town Manager or Ben Bitter, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Supervisor Pete Rios, Pinal County Board of Supervisors, stated that Pinal County is doing well fiscally and their economic development is doing excellent. All their revenues grew last year. Nikola and Lucid were two large projects that are in Pinal County. They will be providing between 4,000 and 5,000 jobs. He stated that he will be running for re-election and has opposition. He does not understand the closure of the prison. His hopes that it will take years before it closes as Pinal County is not equipped to accept the state inmates. He stated that Pinal County and Florence need to work together on the Joint Land Use Study regarding the National Guard Facility.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Update on the Cuen Building repairs by Tom and Lynn Smith.**

Mr. Tom Smith and Mrs. Lynn Smith, Florence Resident and property owners of the Cuen Building, stated the plans are complete and construction will begin. The initial plan were over 10 years old and no longer comply with the current codes or SHPO. They hired a new architect who has experience with SHPO and created the new plans. He stated that this building holds historical significance. At one point, it was a butcher shop, telephone exchange on two separate occasions and an attorney's office for Mr. Fulbright and Ernest McFarland, who was a senator and Governor of Arizona.

Mr. Smith stated that the building is worth saving and is thankful to everyone who has assisted him. He explained that concrete was added to two of the walls and must now be removed which will cost approximately \$36,000 to repair. The center wall was a structural wall and was partially removed which caused the roof to sink. The wall will be replaced with adobe. The framework in the roof will remain; however, they will add support to the roof. He stated that there are also wooden walls that will need to be replaced. It appears that they can save approximately 85%-90% of the original building.

Mayor Walter stated that she is impressed with the work that is being done. She stated that they have restored other buildings in Florence and the Town is grateful for all that they do for the community.

### **Presentation recognizing Florence being named the Safest City in Arizona by the National Council for Home Safety and Security.**

Mr. Bruce Walls, Police Chief, stated that out of 38 cities, Florence was named the Safest City in Arizona for 2020 with a crime rate of 6.2 per 1,000 citizens. The second safest city had double the crime rate. The Town received an award that was presented to Council.

**CONSENT: All items on the consent agenda will be handled by a single vote as part of the consent agenda, unless a Councilmember or a member of the public objects at the time the agenda item is called.**

**Approval to enter into a contract with Centimark Corporation, for roof repairs at Fire Station #1 and the South Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility, in an amount not to exceed \$53,682.47.**

**Adoption of a Partial Release of the Judgment Lien insofar as it relates to the real property located at 7901 W. Desert Blossom Way, Florence.**

**Approval of accepting the register of demands ending January 31, 2019, in the amount of \$1,963,845.29.**

On motion of Vice-Mayor Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Larsen, and carried (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda, as written.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Reaffirmation of 2020 rate increase as adopted by Council Resolution No. 1664-18: A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA, AMENDING THE FEE SCHEDULE OF TERMS, RATES, FEES AND CHARGES FOR TOWN-OWNED WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES.**

Ms. Rebecca Jimenez, Finance Director, stated that the resolution is to reaffirm the rates that were set forth in the 2018 Utility Rate Study. Two public hearings were held:

- February 18, 2020
  - No comments received
- February 21, 2020
  - Five people attended
    - Provided general comments on the rates
    - Concerns about rate increases
    - Resolved issued that one of the attendees had on their utility account

Ms. Jimenez stated that they smoothed out the rates so that there would not be a significant impact to the customer.

The request is to reaffirm the rates and set the new rates to begin April 1, 2020.

On motion of Vice-Mayor Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Larsen, and carried (5-0) to reaffirmation of 2020 rate increase as adopted by Council Resolution No. 1664-18.

### **Ordinance No. 690-20:**

Mayor Walter read Ordinance No. 690-20 by title only.

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA, AMENDING THE TOWN OF FLORENCE CODE OF ORDINANCES BY STRIKING SECTIONS 32.030, 32.032, 32.033, 32.120, 32.121, 32.200, 32.201, 32.202 ELIMINATING THE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD, THE ARTS AND CULTURE BOARD, AND THE FLORENCE YOUTH COMMISSION AND BY MODIFYING THE PARKS AND RECREATIONS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP SECTION 32.086, POWERS AND DUTIES SECTION 32.087 AND MEETING SECTION 32.015.**

Mr. Bryan Hughes, Community Services Director stated that this is the second reading. The ordinance is to combine the Library Advisory Board, Arts and Culture Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board into one board that will have nine members with two alternates. It will also allow for three members to be from the Town's planning area, not the Town limits. It will also have a liaison from the Florence Teen Council. The new board will meet once per month.

On motion of motion of Vice-Mayor Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Larsen, and carried (5-0) to adopt Ordinance No. 690-20.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Resolution No. 1731-20:**

Mayor Walter read Resolution No. 1731-20 by title only.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA, APPROVING, REAFFIRMING, RESTATING AND RE-ESTABLISHING THE FLORENCE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA BOUNDARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SLUM OR BLIGHT BASED UPON ONGOING SUBSTANTIAL ACTIONS TAKEN TO REMOVE THE SLUM AND BLIGHT CONDITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES.**

Mr. Larry Harmer, Senior Planner, stated that part of the process to update the Town of Florence Redevelopment Plan requires that the boundary of the plan be reaffirmed. The current boundary of the Redevelopment Plan Area was established via Resolution No. 877-04. That resolution included commercial and vacant properties along Main Street, most of the Historic District and the Territory Square Planning Area north and west of Town Hall. The attached Resolution No. 1731-20 demonstrates the area through mapping and legal description.

Mr. Harmer stated that the Redevelopment Plan Update is currently preparing for its second Open House scheduled for March 12, 2020 at Town Hall in the Council Chambers. The focus of this Open House will be the draft Land Use Plan. All interested members of the public are invited. There will be specific invitations forwarded to participants of the first Open House and to members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Historic District Advisory Commission and Chamber of Commerce Director. The meeting has been posted.

On motion of Councilmember Larsen, seconded by Vice-Mayor Anderson, and carried (5-0) to adopt Resolution No. 1731-20.

**Resolution No. 1734-20:**

Mayor Walter read Resolution No. 1734-20 by title only.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA, ESTABLISHING REGULAR MEETING LOCATIONS, DATES AND TIMES FOR TOWN OF FLORENCE TOWN COUNCIL AND TOWN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.**

Mr. Hughes stated that this establishes the meeting dates and times for the Town Council, boards and commissions. This is allowing for the new Community Services Advisory Board to meet on the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. All other meeting dates and times will remain status quo.

Vice-Mayor Anderson inquired if worksessions can be held away from Town Hall.

Mayor Walter stated that Council can hold special meetings at other locations.

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Councilmember Cordes, and carried (5-0) to adopt Resolution. No. 1734-20.

**First Reading of Ordinance No. 691-20:**

Mayor Walter read Ordinance No. 691-20 by title only.

## **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA AMENDING SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 32.001 (D) TOWN BOARDS, COMMISSION, AND COMMITTEES.**

Mr. Hughes stated that this is to amend the Town Code to remove the old boards and replace with the Community Services Advisory Board.

### **Discussion/Approval/Disapproval to adopt the Public Involvement Plan for the General Plan Update.**

Mr. Harmer stated that ARS §9-461.06 requires that the Town Council adopt a plan that allows for public outreach. This plan was prepared based on the Town's General Plan consultants defined scope and feedback they obtained from the initial Project Immersion activities held on January 8, 2020. These activities included one-on-one staff interviews, a visual tour of the community and afternoon interactive meeting with Department Heads and staff. As a reminder, our consultant, Michael Baker International, already possesses significant knowledge of the Town and our Planning Area through their previous work preparing our Regional Transportation Plan and the San Tan Valley Area Plan for Pinal County.

Mr. Harmer stated that the Public Involvement Plan outlines the numerous steps that will be taken throughout the update process to insure comprehensive involvement by all facets of our community. These steps include meetings with stakeholders, community members, elected and appointed officials, focus groups and community workshops. Additional efforts will be placed media and digital engagement.

Councilmember Wall stated that this is a very important phase of the General Plan Update. She wants to ensure that they use the Next-Door website be included as well as the weekly newsletters to get the information out.

Mr. Harmer stated that they can add flyers into the utility bill.

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Vice-Mayor Anderson, and carried (5-0) to adopt the Public Involvement Plan for the General Plan Update.

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Ben Bitter, Assistant to the Town Manager, provided an update on the following bills:

- HB2705
  - Florence's Bill on abandoned buildings
  - Has been stuck in the Rules Committee as they are awaiting the amendment.
  - Staff has proposed the amendment to the Realtor's Association, and they have accepted the amendment.
  - This bill will be moving out of the Committee
- HB2551
  - Heritage Fund
  - Successfully passed out of the House and moves on to the Senate.
  - Would allow for additional dollars for Heritage and Park preservation.

- Anticipate \$10,000,000 appropriation
- Bill pertaining to Certificate of Needs and Necessity
  - Removes requirement for all communities and areas
  - Bill died in the House
  - Waiting to see if it pops up on another bill as a striker bill

Councilmember Cordes inquired what amendments needed to be made with the Realtor's Association.

Mr. Bitter stated that some definitions were better clarified such as what constitutes vacant and abandoned buildings and locations. The bill, after the amendment, is 80-90% conforming to what the Town is trying to accomplish.

Mayor Walter asked that Mr. Bitter provide a listing of bills that are similar to this bill so Council can sign in to support those bills.

## **MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Billingsley provided an update on relational data on single family permits and how it is tied it to valuation. This has a direct impact to the Town's economic prosperity

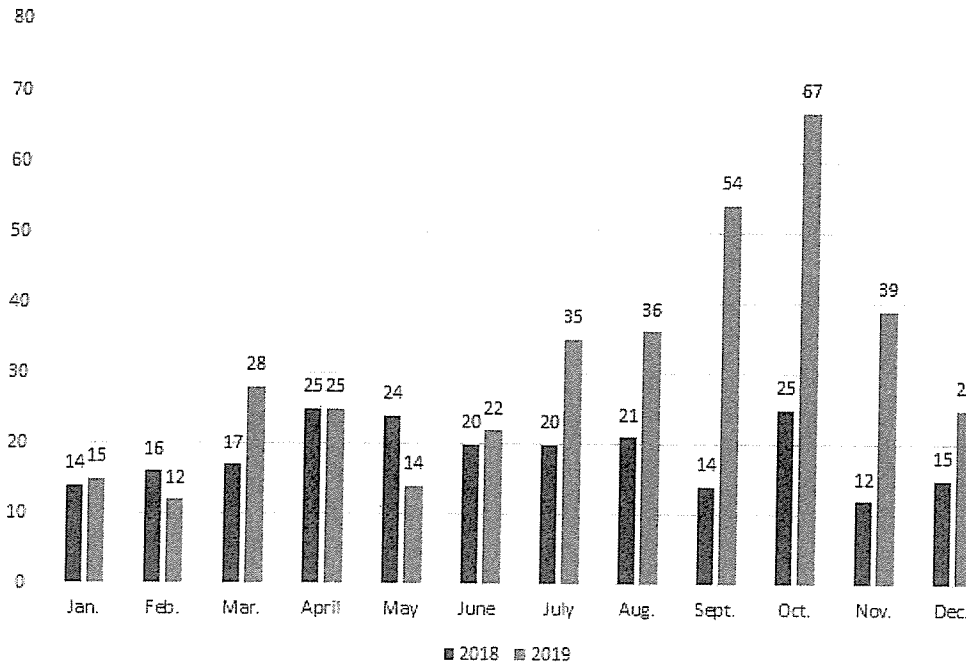
Mr. Billingsley explained that the first graphic represents Single-Family Residential Permit activity in Florence over the last two calendar years (2018/2019). The permit activity has significantly increased. Primary contributors to permit growth are market strength, the addition of another major homebuilder (DR Horton), and the addition of "infill" development in the Florence Town Core.

Mr. Billingsley explained that the second graphic provides a representation of how that single-family growth, coupled with other permit activity, affects the valuation of our community. The January 2020 valuation includes the new Pinal County Development Services Building, permit valuation at \$9,300,000.

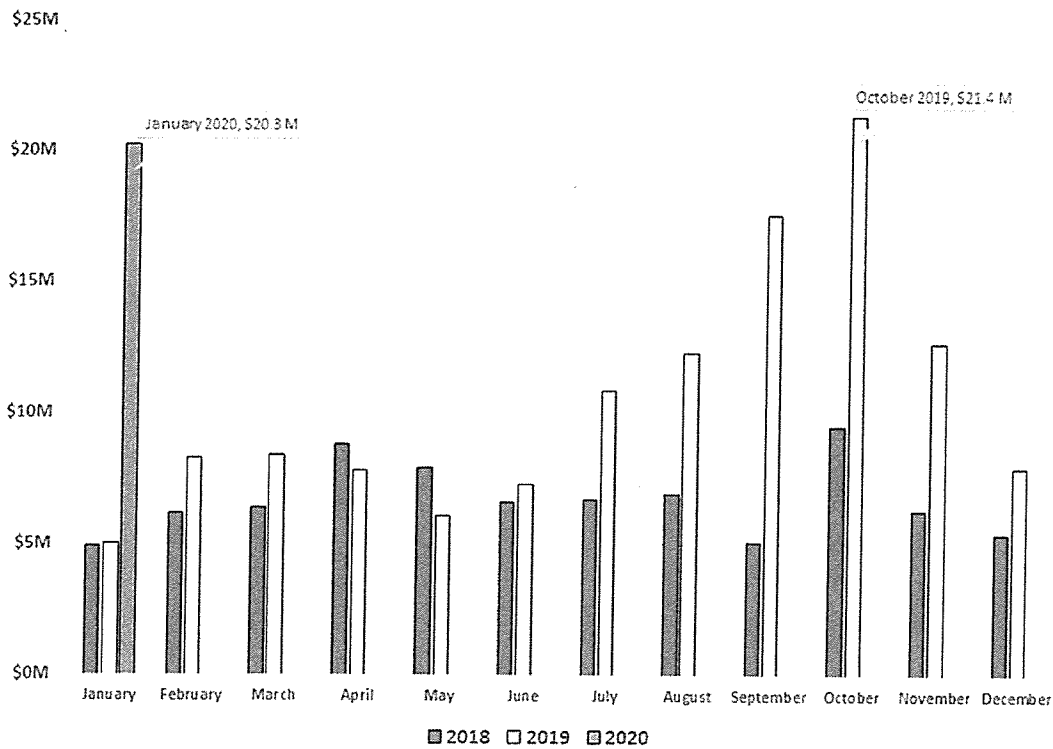
Mr. Billingsley stated what is impressive is when you compare the permitting data to actual valuation being provided to the Town on a monthly basis. The lowest value from 2018, 2019, and 2020 is \$5 million in one month; however, two recent months the valuation increase by \$20 million of construction.

Mayor Walter stated that the permits have grown 66.8% from this same time last year.

### Single Family Residential Permits



### Monthly Building Permit Valuation (in Millions)



## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Community Development**  
**Community Services**  
**Courts**  
**Finance**  
**Fire**  
**Police**  
**Public Works**

The Department Reports were received and filed.

## **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no public comments.

## **CALL TO THE COUNCIL – CURRENT EVENTS ONLY**

Councilmember Cordes stated that she attended the Spring Parade in Caliente. She also attended an event at the Visitor Center where grants were being awarded and she was able to see raw copper, which was very impressive.

Vice-Mayor Anderson stated that he attended the Fashion Show at the Women's Club. It was a great event.

Mayor Walter stated that the Women's Club raised funds for all three high schools in the District. They had state and national representatives at this event as well. It is Read Across America Week and many have volunteered to do so. She invited everyone to the Florence Music Festival and other events in our community.

Councilmember Larsen thanked Mr. Hughes for his service to the Town and wished him well.

Mr. Bryan Hughes, Community Services Director, stated that working with Florence for six years has been rewarding. He has had many great experiences with the Town. His staff is amazing, and he is fortunate to work with great employees.

## **ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**For the purposes of discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body and/or legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. Sections 38-431.03 (A)(3), (A)(4) and (A)(7) to consider its position and instruct its representatives and/or attorneys regarding:**

- **Town's position and instruct its attorneys regarding pending litigation in Maricopa County Superior Court: Town of Florence v. Florence Copper, Inc. CV2015-000325, including counterclaims.**
- **Town's position and instruct its attorneys regarding Arizona Department of Environmental Quality proceedings, related to Water Quality Appeals Board Case No. 16-002, including appellate proceedings to reviewing courts.**



- Discussion or consultations regarding the Town of Florence intervention in the matter of the Arizona Corporation Commission's investigation into the 2019-2020 rate case.
- Possible discussions on government agencies and private entities involving the purchase, sale or lease of real property and other property related to the Town of Florence's water and wastewater systems, including upgrades, expansions, contracts, and/or settlement discussions related thereto.
- Discussion on possible contract negotiations with Magma Flood Control District.

On motion of Vice-Mayor Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Larsen, and carried (5-0) to adjourn to Executive Session.

#### **ADJOURNMENT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Vice-Mayor Anderson, carried (5-0) to adjourn from Executive Session.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Councilmember Cordes, and carried (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m.



Tara Walter, Mayor

ATTEST:



Lisa Garcia, Town Clerk

I certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Florence Town Council meeting held on March 2, 2020, and that the meeting was duly called to order and that a quorum was present.



Lisa Garcia, Town Clerk

